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the expense of the Soviet Union in which the dream of a revived *Rzecz Pospolita* (never absent from the mind of the ageing Pilsudski) might be combined with a German *Drang nach Osten* which could give to the Third Reich effective predominance over a great economic land empire stretching beyond the Don and the Caucasus to Turkestan and the Altai. At the same time the German understanding with Japan threatened the Far Eastern dominions of the Soviet Union.

'The Ukrainian Question' began to be discussed in the German Press, and from 1934 'the foreign danger' ceased to be only a conventional formula at Soviet political trials. The uneasy masters of the Kremlin began to believe in its reality. The memoirs of the ex-Chekist Krivitski have made it clear that from an early date after Hitler's accession to power Stalin was planning to create a situation in which he might be able to arrive at a compromise with his adversary in Berlin—an event which was eventually consummated between the two parties in August 1939.

A direct collaboration with the Russians, as an alternative to joint aggression with Poland, had always attracted influential circles in Germany—circles which included the majority of those soldiers, technicians and business men who, during the Rapallo period, when many Germans were employed as specialists in Russia, had had excellent opportunities for forming a clear appreciation of realities in the Soviet Union. Many connections, direct and indirect, existed between these men and high officials in the Soviet armed forces, administration and industry.

The unsurpassed genius of Stalin for political manœuvre was never better illustrated than when he succeeded in annihilating all those elements most likely to be in—or in the future to enter into—relations with the Germans. Thus, at the same time, he was able to deprive the Germans of their potential collaborators, and was himself able to assume the position which his victims had intended to occupy vis-à-vis the Germans. From Stalin's point of view the execution of the 'Red' generals in 1935 was a preventive rather than a punitive measure, as were the subsequent widespread 'purges' in the armed forces and among the Communist officials in the national republics in the Ukraine, Caucasia and Central Asia. It was not by accident that the first to be eliminated were those who owed their revolutionary careers to their capacity for enterprise and daring action: the Marshals Tukhachevski, Uborevich and Yakir.

A Jew by origin, Yakir had distinguished himself in Budenny's 'Red Mounted Army' during the Bolshevik invasion of Poland in the summer of 1920, and later during the liquidation of the *atamans'*